



2024 Legislative Policy

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PREAMBLE

Being duly elected and assembled, we, the members of the Iowa Farmers Union present this policy statement in order to identify the aims and purposes of our organization.

We fully support the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Our purpose as embodied by the Farmers Union triangle is cooperation, education, and legislation.

We believe that Farmers must work cooperatively to do those things that individuals acting alone cannot do for themselves. Recognizing our historic involvement with farmer owned and controlled cooperatives and their role in improving economic conditions for family farmers; we reaffirm our commitment to the cooperative system.

We endeavor to provide education to our members on issues and ideas important to family farm agriculture. We further endeavor to provide the general public with information on the important role of family farm agriculture.

We work closely with elected officials at the federal, state, and local level, to pursue public policy that ensures a safe and stable food supply and economic conditions that treat family farmers fairly.

Our historic focus and our ongoing concern is the continuation of the family farm system of agriculture. We believe that it is in the best interests of the nation and the world to have agricultural production in the hands of family farmers.

Our environment is best protected by family farmers, who have a long-term interest in the productivity of the land and the safety and purity of our water.

Our communities are best served socially and economically by family farmers, who fully participate in the commerce, government, and activities of their local community.

Our food supply's safety and affordability is best preserved by family farmers operating in a fair and competitive market situation.

We believe, and real-life examples prove, that when agricultural production is controlled by corporations, our environment, our communities and the safety and affordability of our food supply are jeopardized.

The family farm system of agriculture cannot exist without a fair economic return for farmers.

We believe that food production represents a truly unique economic structure and as such deserves special and unique consideration from the government.

The demand for food is universal and does not respond like other products to changes in price. Food production decisions are made months in advance of the final marketing, and therefore cannot be adjusted as prices rise or fall. Because the fixed costs are so high, and because agricultural land cannot readily be transferred to another use, food production does not voluntarily decrease in response to falling prices.

Food production is also uniquely affected by uncontrollable factors, such as the weather. Because food is absolutely necessary for human life, governments have a responsibility

to ensure a stable, abundant, and safe supply of food for all people. Government programs in the United States have largely been effective in ensuring a stable and adequate supply of food.

These programs have given Americans the least expensive, safest, and most abundant food supply the world has ever seen. The failures of government programs should not be a rationale for dismantling them, but rather a rationale for needed improvements.

The recommendations set forth in this policy statement are designed to reaffirm the family farm structure as the primary agricultural system, to assure rural and urban stability, national prosperity, the preservation of human and natural resources, and the dignity of the individual and family.

FEDERAL ISSUES

I. AGRICULTURE, FOOD & NUTRITION

Agriculture & the Farm Program

The original goal of national farm policy was to provide equality of income for farm families comparable to the average income of families in other segments of the society. We call upon Congress to return to this goal.

We support a national food security policy that recognizes the imperative need for any nation, but especially our nation, to place the first priority on the ability to feed itself as it wishes in order to create security for its citizens. The United States must adopt policies that will maintain its food supply independence.

Iowa Farmers Union favors a long-term predictable food and fiber program. We, therefore, urge the United States Department of Agriculture to utilize the parity formula in determining all loan prices. We reaffirm our basic commitment to the parity formula, using the base years (1910-1914) established by law as the standard by which to determine prices for agricultural commodities that are fair to farmers, ranchers, and the public. Efforts should be made to educate the public regarding parity issues and demonstrate how parity for family-scale agriculture is fundamental to retaining income and equity broadly within rural communities, to bolster public and private institutional infrastructure and social vitality.

Until a long term food and fiber policy supported the National Farmers Union has been passed by Congress, and signed into law by the President,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Conservation Initiatives. The Conservation Stewardship Program should be fully implemented and should include carbon sequestration incentives.
- B. Crop Insurance Availability. Crop insurance should be a strong part of our food security efforts to provide reasonable protection for farmers with coverage available for commodities, livestock, specialty crops, organic production and diversified operations with a *reasonable cap on premium subsidies*.
- C. Reasonable Inventory Management. Reasonable inventory management tools will lead to a less expensive farm program. Farmer-owned and farmer-controlled reserves should be utilized. The United States should pursue worldwide agreements to maintain a world food reserve for humanitarian needs, while avoiding action that unfairly depresses local market prices for farmers in the areas receiving aid.
- D. Tight Payment Limits. Payments should be limited to benefit family-size operations and payment limitations should be tightly enforced.

WE OPPOSE:

- A. Foreign and/or non-family farm corporations participating in farm income support programs.
- B. Decoupling concepts and triple base programs.
- C. Loss of a producer's base program acres because of utilizing fruit, vegetable, and other non-program crops

Beginning Farmer Incentives

With the average age of the American farmer increasing, and historically high land prices and input costs creating hardships for those who want to start farming, it is more important than ever that our policies place special emphasis on assisting the next generation of family farmers and ranchers. Therefore,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. The use of conservation and farming easements to preserve farmland and make it more affordable for beginning farmers.
- B. Prioritizing easement models that preserve land affordability under the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.
- C. Set asides for beginning farmers in existing federal programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).
- D. Improving credit opportunities for beginning farmers, including pre-approval of FSA loans for beginning farmers.
- E. Expanding and improving training for beginning farmers through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP),
- F. Expanding the definition and scope of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) to include more urban and historically underserved aspiring farmers.
- G. A federal program offering student loan forgiveness for beginning farmers.

WE OPPOSE:

- A. The use of EQIP grants to finance the building of AFOs and CAFOs.

Other Farmer Incentives

The Farmers Union supports programming to assist individuals who are interested in returning to farming, are veterans, and/or new to farming.

Checkoff Programs

Commodity checkoff programs must be accountable to the needs of family farmers. All commodity checkoffs should be voluntary at the point of sale. Mandatory referendums should be conducted every 4 years. Checkoff funds should only be used toward marketing and research that benefits family-sized producers. Checkoff funds should in no way be used for lobbying and political activities. Checkoff funds should not be commingled in any way with funds used for lobbying or political activity.

Commodity Reserves

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Isolating strategic food reserves from the market by enforcing provisions of:
 - 1. Holding commodities below 110% of parity and releasing only when equal to or greater than 110% of parity and
 - 2. Withholding reserves below 130% of parity.
- B. On-farm storage payments equal to commercial storage rates.
- C. Farmer-owned strategic reserves, with a cap on the number of bushels any individual farmer could hold.
- D. U.S. participation in a world strategic food reserve addressing fair and free trade to stabilize world farm income.

E. Congress to fund all current reserve programs.

Corporate Farms & Monopolies

Large corporate enterprises are moving into the production of agricultural commodities at an alarming rate. Their volume and financial ties tend to deprive family farmers of an equal opportunity for profitable production of agricultural commodities. Therefore,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Federal enforcement of current antitrust legislation.
- B. Implementation of new antitrust initiatives to stop concentration in the meat packing industry.
- C. Consideration of a coalition of farm organizations to take legal action to force the federal government to enforce antitrust laws.
- D. Federal legislation that would prohibit any packer ownership and/or contract feeding of livestock.
- E. Limiting control by any one corporation or individual to 5% of production of any ag product.
- F. Enforcing antitrust laws regarding the seed and ag chemical industry.
- G. Banning foreign and/or non-farm corporate ownership of agricultural land.

Crop Insurance

Crop insurance and revenue coverage should never be considered a replacement for fair market prices and an adequate price support program. We support the continuation and improvement of the federal crop insurance program. We also support:

- A. The permanent disaster program, which addresses both catastrophic and less than catastrophic losses. We encourage congress to remodel the current program to improve its effectiveness.
- B. Development of new products that allow producers to protect their income in time of low prices and/or quality losses.
- C. Development of products that allow producers to better protect against livestock and livestock feed losses.
- D. Changing the final sign-up for crop insurance in the Midwest region to April 15.
- E. Targeting of subsidies toward farmer benefits and protection of farmer assets.
- F. Implementation of Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) in Iowa for specialty crop production, organic production and diversified operations.
- G. Implementation of a national system of premium buy-downs for beginning farmers.
- H. Conservation compliance as a requirement to receive federally subsidized crop insurance.
- I. Limiting federal crop insurance premium subsidies to a level that targets support to family-scale farms and avoids subsidizing expansion and consolidation of farm ownership by mega farms and non-farm investors.
- J. Inversely indexing crop insurance premium subsidies to the size of the operation.

Farm Credit

We oppose high interest rates as a means to control inflation. Government policy makers should recognize that in today's credit oriented society, high interest rates fuel inflation by adding unreasonable costs at all levels of our economy.

We urge the passage of federal usury ceiling laws to stabilize a usury rate based on its ratio to rate of inflation.

We oppose the use of any points on loans.

We call for an end to the use of public funds being loaned to non-family farm entities livestock, corn and other grain production schemes, packing and processing plants that are noted for their low wage scales, under the auspices of the USDA, REC, and SBA lending authorities.

We urge farm lending agencies to seek help from the federal government to assist in lowering interest rates to make it comparable to farmer's net return on investment.

Farmers should have the first option of buying back their own foreclosed land at current land prices, on the condition that they hold the land for the next five years.

In the event a farm is foreclosed, the farmer should have first option to lease the farm up to a three-year period, with the option to buy back the property.

Bankruptcy laws available to small businesses should be available to farmers.

We encourage tax laws that create opportunities for beginning and returning farmers, as opposed to corporate and/or foreign entities.

We support adequate funding from the federal government to Farm Service Agency (FSA) to live up to their traditional role as the lender of first opportunity for beginning farmers and the lender of last resort for experienced farmers.

Farmers Union should monitor the Farmer Mac Program to assure that it follows the intent of Congress and helps family farmers, rather than transferring ownership of land to corporate investors.

Because rural America, small towns, schools and churches are suffering as a result of the depopulation taking place because of the growing concentration in agriculture, we support programs which target loans and other types of assistance to beginning and small family farm type operations.

We fully support appropriate oversight and investigations by congressional committees into all farm lending practices including predatory lending practices.

Farm Safety

We recommend that farm equipment manufacturers be subject to rules requiring product safety, and that manufacturers be liable for damages suffered due to injuries caused by faulty equipment.

Tractor rollovers have been found to be a major source of farm related fatalities. Roll Over Protection Devices should be required on farm tractors. Extensive education campaigns should be conducted by agricultural extension services regarding this danger. In addition, the public interest would be well served by a public-private partnership between the federal or state government and equipment manufacturers to provide financial incentive to farmers to install roll over protection devices on existing tractors. We encourage farmer participation in safety education programs in conjunction with this partnership.

International Trade

We encourage a realistic approach to world trade, recognizing that the United States controls the world corn and grain market and sets world price trends. We believe international corn and grain sales should be covered by an International Grains agreement with the intention of pricing world corn and other grains at parity levels, to insure price and income stability to the producer.

We support a boycott of products produced by any company that, following the adoption of NAFTA, and any successor to it moves an established factory outside the U.S. in order to capitalize on cheaper labor.

We recommend that a corn and grain marketing board be established by legislation. The board should contain equal representation by farmers, and it should negotiate the export sales of all U.S. corn and grain sold in the world trade. Until then, we recommend that corn/grain companies be required to report the actual origin as well as destination of all corn/grain sales or purchases at the time of sale or purchase. Additional international commodity agreements should be developed.

We call for an investigation into the influence of foreign countries and/or multinational corporations on the Chicago Board of Trade.

Any interruption in agriculture commodity exports, unless in a time of national emergency, should require that the loan rate be raised to 100% of parity.

In the event of any embargo of agriculture commodities, sales of all other products or materials must also be embargoed.

We support the creation of a general agreement on production and prices.

We encourage all nations including the United States to move away from market distorting mechanisms, such as the Export Enhancement Program, which continually lower world market price.

We support legislation to stop the "circle of poison." Companies should not be allowed to sell or export chemicals or products that have been banned in the United States.

We do not believe in "Free Trade," we believe in "Fair Trade."

Labeling & Animal Identification

We support mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL) of all food products. We support efforts to identify and make known to consumers the origin of their food products. We believe that all imported agricultural products should have their country of origin clearly labeled through all stages to the consumer. If at any time the animal, fruit, vegetable, or other agricultural product, in any stage of production, has been outside the United States, it should be labeled as originating from the country from which it was imported. Country of origin labeling should be clearly distinguished from domestic livestock identification.

In order to attempt to track animals in the event of a disease outbreak, the USDA has implemented the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). This is a joint effort between state government, federal government, and industry to integrate three components – premise identification, animal identification, and animal tracking.

While the implementation of this program appears to be in the public's interest in terms of food safety, we have the following concerns about the implementation and

usage of the system:

- A. Those who should benefit from its implementation, i.e. packers, processors, and retailers, should pay the cost of the system. Livestock producers or livestock auctions should not shoulder the costs associated with the NAIS.
- B. USDA should enforce animal ID at the first point of sale.

Livestock Production Practices

Agricultural producers and agricultural researchers, supported by private enterprise and producer funded groups, basically strive to maintain a quality atmosphere and healthful environment for livestock, confined and otherwise, therefore,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Federal funding for eradication of brucellosis, pseudo-rabies, and other livestock diseases being maintained or increased, if needed.
- B. Increase federal funding of sustainable livestock production research.
- C. Investigation of animal treatment by large factory farms.
- D. Open horse slaughtering plants as long as humane slaughtering practices are enforced.
- E. Stronger USDA regulation of puppy mills and stricter fines for violations.

Local and Regional Food Systems

We support the movement by farmers and ranchers to market their products to local communities in a fair and equitable manner. We believe that local and regional food systems increase awareness of the value and importance of locally grown foods to consumers and create economic vitality for communities. We further believe that such production and marketing can provide increased sustainable income to the farmer and rancher by increasing the share of the food dollar retained by the farmer. In addition, less energy is wasted through transportation when local and regional food systems are created and used. Therefore,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. The development of federal programs to support the creation and expansion of local and regional food systems, including the creation and continuation of direct and wholesale contract market programs.
- B. Self-governance of farmers markets and local and regional food systems.
- C. Preference given to local food for government institutional food purchases at fair prices for the farmers producing the food.
- D. Continuation and funding of the Senior Farmers Market Program and the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Farmers Market Program.
- F. Continuation and development of the "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" program within the Department of Agriculture.
- G. Continuation and development of the Local Food Purchasing Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program and the Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program.
- H. Financial assistance to small farm operators in the form of loans, grants, letters of credit, equity financing and buy-downs to finance the expansion and improvement of farming operations and the development of farmer-owned cooperative marketing and processing ventures.
- I. Assistance to small farm operators, food hubs, aggregators, and distributors in marketing and processing specialty crops, livestock, dairy and poultry.
- J. Creating federal standards for meat processing that give small farm operators selling to local and regional markets better access to retail-certified meat processing.
- K. Making Good Agricultural Practices (GAPS) and Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Certification more affordable and less of a regulatory burden for small and mid-size farms.

- L. An expansion of the Investing in America agenda for urban agriculture, food, and market access to a minimum of at least one county per state.

While we support maintaining public health standards, we oppose attempts to over-regulate farmers markets and local and regional food systems.

In the event of an outbreak of infectious disease in U.S. livestock populations, a blanket approach by federal emergency response may unfairly harm small-scale producers and expose those farms and their animals to increased risk when inspectors move from large facilities where the disease is present to small facilities with no biohazard equipment on site. Federal emergency plans for responding to infectious disease in U.S. livestock populations should include special provisions for small farms that maintain a relatively small number of animals for direct sale to consumers and that do not have access to the on-site biohazard equipment found in large animal confinements.

Marketing

We object to shipping animals across the border to be processed, and then returned to the United States.

Open market access is essential to an equitable livestock industry. Preferential pricing and captive supplies encourage corporate control of the livestock industry. We oppose any weakening of the Packers and Stockyards Act. We strongly encourage the Packers and Stockyards Administration to aggressively pursue violations under the Packers and Stockyards Act pertaining to the beef, pork, and poultry industry. We call on Congress to strengthen their position on enforcement provisions with effective penalties for violations.

WE SUPPORT:

1. All bailment contracts for agricultural production being clearly labeled as bailment contracts and clearly defining farmer responsibilities.
2. The USDA and Department of Justice investigation into violations of anti-trust laws and other unlawful manipulations of the food system by agribusiness' stranglehold on the processing, marketing, and retail of agricultural products and because of ever increasing levels of vertical integration in the food industry.

WE OPPOSE:

1. Any effort by the United States Government to interfere with prices in the developing countries that might work to the detriment of their farmers
2. discounting the price by packers on the basis of number of hogs (volume) marketed. We support mandatory reporting of all captive supplies
3. The trading of unregulated options for agricultural commodities. We oppose vertical integration of processors into agricultural activities. We oppose any monopolistic or monopsonistic practices that create unfair buying or selling power and deny access to markets for small to medium livestock producers.

Marketing Boards

We recommend that Congress pass legislation setting up corn and other grains, and livestock marketing boards to be composed of one member from each general farm organization.

The Iowa Farmers Union reaffirms its support for enabling legislation to establish a National Agricultural Relations Board or separate board for single commodities or groups of closely related commodities, with authority to bring farmers and farm cooperatives together with processors for the purpose of bargaining over prices received by agricultural producers. Farmers need and are entitled to a firm legal procedure, which will enable them to manage the production and marketing of their products. Such legislation should preserve, unimpaired, the longstanding rights of farmers to participate in bargaining associations and cooperatives without being subject to antitrust action.

WE SUPPORT:

1. An amendment of the Agricultural Fair Practices Act of 1967 to require buyers of agricultural products to bargain in good faith with associations of producers.
2. A contract grower's bill of rights to eliminate misleading and manipulative contract provisions and to protect farmer investments.

Meat & Grain Grading & Inspection

Increasingly, customers of our grain production are requesting specific grades and standards to better suit their end uses. In order for the United States to remain competitive in the global market, we urge the USDA, through the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA), to review and revise current grain standards to better respond to the marketplace. These may include, but not limited to, the following: Premium Non-GMO corn, Premium Non-GMO soybeans, Ethanol Grade corn, Ethanol Grade wheat, Ethanol Grade sorghum, and Bio-Diesel Grade soybeans. Through the use of these grades, producers may be better able to market their production toward specific end-use channels, and thus obtain premiums over existing commodity grades.

We feel a premium should be paid on high quality grain. A premium should be paid for low moisture corn and other grain in the same ratio that it is docked when too wet. We favor ongoing federally supervised corn, and other grain inspection at inland delivery points.

Corn and other grain grading practices should be revised and upgraded to more realistic standards.

WE SUPPORT:

1. Legislation to restore the integrity of the warehouse receipt for stored corn and other grain. The Federal bankruptcy laws should be changed to give farmers the same status as secured creditors in the disposition of the assets in a warehouse bankruptcy proceeding.
2. An investigation and revision of all meat grading practices. All imported meat should not be marketed until it meets USDA standards and should be conspicuously labeled as to point of origin and date processed
3. The certification of killing floor technicians in all packing plants who measure the percentage of lean meat.
4. Restricting the selling of foreign material and off grade corn and grain mixed with the corn and grain to foreign markets. Any company exporting poor quality

- corn or other grain, or excessive foreign material, should have their grain dealers license suspended and assessed penalties.
5. Federal legislation to allow interstate shipment of state inspected meat products when the state inspection standards meet or exceed federal standards.
 6. All shipments of imported food products being inspected for safety, health and national security purposes.

Mad Cow Disease. We encourage beef packing plants and federal government agencies to perform all necessary tests for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or "mad cow disease") on incoming cattle, and beef packing plants may be allowed to conduct additional tests if they choose. We oppose reductions in the number of tests required by the USDA.

Nutrition

We urge Congress to restore adequate funding to programs such as school lunch, school milk, food stamps and other supplemental programs providing improved nutrition for those who do not have the income to buy it.

An adequate supply of food is an important part of the national food policy; as it is an important part of a national farm policy. The ability of consumers to buy food determines the real demand for farm products. We recommend that it is in the best interest of American farmers to continue these programs under the administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. However, we oppose any efforts to replace food stamps with actual payment in cash to program recipients.

WE SUPPORT:

1. Any company receiving federal or state funding being required to pay a wage high enough to take employees off food stamps and other federally funded programs.
2. Nutrition standards that incorporate considerations of social and economic justice and environmental sustainability, with a clear emphasis on reducing public health concerns that are rooted in our food system, including increasing incentives and reducing barriers so that people can grow more food for themselves.

Seed Industry

Iowa farmers are paying historically high prices for seeds and are finding fewer choices of varieties. Farmers need access to a variety of seeds at reasonable, competitive prices.

Concentration of market power in the seed industry is a major problem for rural Iowa.

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Reasonable prices for a reasonable choice of seeds.
- B. A diversified seed industry that encourages multiple independent seed companies serving local communities.
- C. Free market competition in the seed marketplace that promotes innovation, research, and the development of new seed varieties.
- D. A prohibition on seed company licensing agreements that ban a company from carrying another competitor's traits because this discourages the development of seeds possessing the best of all traits.
- E. Asking the Iowa Attorney General to conduct a joint investigation and possible enforcement action with other state Attorneys General regarding alleged violations of U.S. anti-trust and trade practice laws in the seed industry.

II. ENERGY, LAND USE, CONSERVATION & THE ENVIRONMENT

Chemicals & Additives

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Using the precautionary approach in the regulatory approval process for the marketing of new chemicals or new uses of chemicals already on the market.
- B. Publicly funded research on the long-term human, animal and ecological impacts of exposure to chemicals used in agriculture.
- C. Passage of the "Circle of Poison" legislation: would prohibit the export of pesticides that are not registered for domestic use and would not be exported for use on food or have the majority of its registration canceled.
- D. Requiring research institutions to submit environmental/economic/social impact statements prior to marketing new technologies.
- E. A container deposit law to apply to all farm chemicals.
- F. Legislation that would develop incentives for farmers to reduce use of chemicals and work toward a sustainable agriculture program.
- G. Requiring that before marketing a new product, chemical companies first develop medical procedures to remedy harmful effects to human health due to accidental misuse. Such procedures should be stated in bold print on the label.
- H. Prohibition of growth hormones in feed additives.
- I. Adding buffer distance around sinkholes and watershed drainage-ways and minimum soil depth criteria to the requirements for the NRCS evaluations done for the Department of Natural Resources Manure Management Plans and for anhydrous ammonia application and restoration of the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE3) equations.

Energy

Given the importance of our soils and natural resources, conservation needs must take priority over other uses, including renewable energy. We believe the United States should promote, expand, and ensure localized ownership to the fullest degree possible in renewable/alternative energy development including wind, solar, bio-fuels, and other technologies.

We favor an energy policy that protects our nation's farmers' interests in continuing to receive adequate supplies of fuel for agricultural purposes.

The danger of leakage in nuclear plants while in operation and storage problems of nuclear waste appear very much greater than first anticipated. Nuclear power is dirty, dangerous, expensive, and not a climate solution. Therefore, we call for a complete moratorium on all new construction of nuclear power plants.

WE SUPPORT:

- 1. The development of renewable energy cooperatives in which producers own and control the majority of the company.
- 2. Support mandated federal efficiency standards for energy use
- 3. Maintaining Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards at 50 miles per gallon, and creating CAFE standards for SUV's (Sports Utility Vehicles) and pickups.
- 4. The further development of efficiency standards for tractors, trucks, and other farm equipment.
- 5. The domestic production of more flex-fuel vehicles to encourage the use of domestic biofuel and reduce the need for imported oil.

6. An energy fuel structure, allowing users to be the owners, each owner/user having one vote, to combat monopolistic tendencies in the energy industry
7. Programs to research, develop and promote alternate energy sources and the improvement of the infrastructure to support sustainably produced energy.
8. The development of alternate uses of diverse farm commodities, with a focus on moving to next generation biofuels such as cellulosic ethanol and renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel and the development of perennial cropping systems, which will improve the sustainability of feedstock production.
9. Current EPA rules for oxygenated fuel requirements and urge the use of ethanol to meet these requirements.
10. The property right to install technology for renewable energies such as wind, solar, biomass conversion, and battery storage and selling excess energy to electric companies and rural electric cooperatives at the utility company's energy purchase price from their other providers.
11. Net metering of electricity usage at the farm.
12. Immediate research into replacement of the current electric energy distribution grid with a distributed generation system.
13. The dual use of farm land for the simultaneous use of solar production and farming in a practice known as agrivoltaics.
14. The establishment of a renewable fuel standard (RFS) that requires a minimum of 20 percent of our nation's fuel supply to be derived from renewable commodities.
15. Creating a Renewable Fuels Energy Reserve equal to one year's use of ethanol and soy biodiesel, to be stored in farmer-owned facilities in commodities used to make renewable fuels, and where producers will be compensated for storage and eligible for commodity loans.
16. Full funding of renewable energy programs in the Farm Bill and urge Congress to consider reclassifying the appropriations for those programs as mandatory spending.
17. A renewable electricity standard (RES) of 100% by 2030 that applies to rural and electric distribution cooperatives.
18. An energy efficiency resources standard (EERS) of 15% of retail sales by 2030 that applies to rural electric distribution cooperatives.

Genetically Modified Organisms & Biotechnology

We support the adoption of a precautionary principle in the regulatory approval process for genetically modified organisms, including in situ gene editing technology.

We support publicly funded research into the long-term human, animal and ecological impacts of genetically modified traits deployed in agricultural production.

We oppose the patenting of life forms. We further oppose patent holders charging farmers exorbitant technical fees and royalties for access to genetically modified seeds and patented farm animals.

We oppose further use of tax dollars in developing terminator technology that would insure that seed will not reproduce. We oppose the development and selling of seed that is sterile.

We advocate legislation requiring that patent holders or owners of GMO technology be held strictly liable for safety, human health or environmental problems, including cross-pollination or

contamination of neighboring crops related to the use of GMOs, as long as generally accepted crop production practices are followed.

If genetically modified organisms are accidentally displaced (through drift, etc.) onto land owned or rented by a farmer, the farmer should not be required to return the crops, or revenue from the crops, which result from the displacement.

Damages caused to farmers through lower prices, lost markets, or contamination, shall be fully reimbursed to farmers by the company producing the genetically modified product. We advocate that all data used in the analysis of the health and environmental effects of GMOs be available to the public.

Government regulatory agencies shall not license genetically modified products that are not acceptable for both human consumption and animal feed. Government regulatory agencies and input suppliers shall ensure that farmers are informed of all potential market risks and segregation requirements associated with planting any licensed genetically modified crop.

All GMO seed shall be clearly labeled with the following information: 1) markets (foreign or domestic) where the product is not accepted; and 2) all planting and handling restrictions. A paper verification system should be put in place to insure input suppliers are informing farmers regarding GMO risks and responsibilities.

WE OPPOSE:

- A. Any patent rights of genetics in farm animals.
- B. The use of bovine somatotropin (BST) or the import of dairy products produced with BST and recommend labeling of all products containing BST.

We support a uniform federal standard that requires the clear labeling of agricultural products containing genetically modified material or ingredients.

Global Climate Change

We declare a climate emergency as an existential crisis to our ability to inhabit the planet Earth. We continue our commitment to the Paris Climate Accords and should reduce carbon emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 and to be net zero emissions by 2050.

We recognize that global climate change represents a threat to our national security and to the security, safety and reliability of our food supply. We support the adoption of a national climate strategy that recognizes the threat of climate change and the leading role of farmers, as the managers of our common resources, in mitigating the worst impacts of climate change. Our national climate strategy should:

- A. Establish a national mandatory price on greenhouse gas emissions, along with a trading system for emission permits that would allow farmers to generate income from on-farm practices that reduce emissions;
- B. Assist farmers in reducing their reliance on the fossil fuels that are the primary contributor to global climate change and transitioning to more sustainable energy sources for on-farm electricity and fuel;
- C. Focus on incentivizing agricultural practices that increase the resilience of our food system by promoting biodiversity in agricultural production;
- D. Promote on-farm production of renewable energy sources such as biofuel, wind and solar power that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while providing income for farmers;
- E. Provide incentives to farmers to adopt the best proven conservation practices to increase living soil organic matter and to sequester carbon and reduce on-farm carbon emissions; and
- F. Create a framework for pursuing an international climate treaty that will facilitate the adoption of these principles and practices on a global scale.

- G. Develop a framework for all types of farmers to secure access to risk mitigation tools, such as farm and crop insurance, to help deal with added vulnerabilities due to climate change.

Rural Utility Cooperatives

We affirm our historic support of the right of the electric power consumers to provide electric service for themselves through rural electric cooperatives (RECs), in which they share ownership and control. To provide service in "hard to serve" areas at a reasonable cost to consumers, we reemphasize our consistent support of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) loan program providing long term, low interest financing for public utility facilities in rural areas.

WE SUPPORT:

- A. RECs purchasing renewable energy from local members and small businesses at a fair market price.
- B. Requiring RECs to allow farmers to offset all their electric usage, including among multiple meters, by production of on-farm renewable energy.

Modifying RUS rules to allow a portion of the electric generation assets of RECs to come from distributed generation resources and to allow distributed generation assets to interconnect without requiring RECs to first modify existing RUS agreements. We support the forgiveness of rural electric cooperatives' coal debt in order to accommodate the investment for wind and solar in our communities. WE OPPOSE:

- A. Any attempts to phase out the REC system.
- B. RECs furnishing electricity to large corporate farms at a discounted rate below average cost to family farm member of the same co-op. Discounts, low-interest loans, and other financial benefits should be disclosed to all co-op members.
- C. RECs co-signing a loan for any other entity.
- D. Large-scale deregulation of the electricity delivery system of our nation; however, we recognize that certain regulations may need to be amended or removed in order to encourage farmer and locally owned energy and distributed energy generation (for example, through policies such as aggregation of meters, fair pricing for electric sales, etc.)
- E. Efforts to tax cooperative dividends.

We feel rural water delivery systems are a viable alternative for rural residents when contamination of rural wells and ponds appears to be a real possibility. Rural water systems should not be viewed as an alternative to good environmental policy. Rural water systems should not be used as a tool to encourage urban sprawl. Instead, rural water systems should be utilized only to enhance rural life by providing a safe and affordable water supply.

Rural water utilities should be required to exercise sound business and financial practices to ensure reliable water at reasonable and stable rates to customers in rural Iowa. We oppose furnishing water to large corporate entities at a discounted rate below average cost to family farm customers. Discounts, low-interest loans, and other financial benefits should be publicly disclosed

Soil & Water Conservation

We reaffirm our belief that farm program eligibility should be tied to resource stewardship.

We support increased funding for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) to allow for adequate rental prices and to encourage landowner participation in the programs. The approval of CRP and WRP

funding should be based on targeting practices (including grazing) that maximize the conservation benefits achieved and that encourage the development of diverse native species. The programs should incorporate monitoring and evaluation requirements to measure improvement as a result of practices adopted and prioritize which practices and locations have the best cost-to-benefit ratio.

We believe that the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) should not subsidize concentrated animal feeding operations.

We favor environmentally appropriate development and maintenance of our river systems in as natural a state as possible for the purposes of flood control and electric power generation and not for specific private use.

We favor the improvement to our present parks and recreational facilities and support county conservation efforts.

Land not suited to annual commodity crops (particularly row crop) should be maintained for wildlife habitat, recreation, or conservation uses such as solar, wind, hay, pasture, and agroforestry.

Structural or perennial soil conservation practices that have been financed by government cost sharing funds should be required to be recorded and made publicly accessible at the FSA. We urge the USDA to allow existing waterways and filter strips in place to enter into the continuous CRP program as newly constructed areas. Strict conservation plans should be enacted and enforced for land coming out of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Land in CRP should stay in the CRP even if the land ownership changes.

Buffer strips of effective width should become mandatory along rivers and large streams.

We support funding for increased cost share to install controls and features that will allow farms to transition away from the practice of watering livestock in open surface waterways.

To promote good maintenance of conservation practices, as well as, use and construction of new practices; credit should be given by adding bushels per acre above the assigned bushel base. These bushels then could be subtracted if improvements were destroyed. The bushels assigned could vary according to the quality and completeness of the practices.

We urge more research to determine the long-term effects of chemicals and fertilizers on the total environment, and encourage proper disposal of chemical wastes, not to exceed thirty days storage of toxic waste.

We urge that all waste from livestock confinement operations and sewage disposal be spread back on the land and incorporated into the topsoil only when it does not create a soil erosion or water pollution problem. Application of liquid manure should be followed by tillage where possible.

USDA-NRCS evaluation systems used for the Iowa DNR manure management plans need to include *RUSLE3*. We urge clarification of water and air pollution laws, and favor more farmer representation on EPA Advisory Committees.

We oppose the sale of water by states to private interests without the consent of all states in a particular river basin. We oppose out-of-state industries drawing water from Iowa aquifers. We support the property right of Iowa landowners to the groundwater beneath their farms.

We favor grazing fees on public lands to be set to be comparable with surrounding privately held lands.

We support the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and urge Congress to fully fund the program at higher per acre rates that might encourage more farmers to participate and implement it according to the original intent of the program, allowing all farmers to become eligible.

The base acres for all farm programs should be updated to reflect current planted acres.

We support NRCS direct funding for increased staff and technical support, specifically to improve infrastructure and technology to aid conservation planning and implementation.

III. RURAL QUALITY OF LIFE & THE ECONOMY

Communications

We support continued funding for public radio and public television to ensure rural areas have access to reliable information from the media.

We support the expansion of broadband internet access to rural areas.

Cooperatives

We remain wholly dedicated to the strengthening of the family farm system and farmer cooperatives and resolutely opposed to an industrialized type of corporate farming or to domination of farm ownership and operation by off-farm or alien interest. The essence of the cooperative movement--farmers working together for their mutual benefit--is the spirit which motivates every Farmers Union activity.

Because we view attempts to restrict farmer owned and controlled cooperatives as an assault on farmers themselves,

WE OPPOSE:

- A. Attempts to repeal the Capper-Volstead Act.
- B. Attempts to increase the interest rates charged to the Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).
- C. The practice of co-ops, both local and regional, from producing agricultural commodities and custom farming when in competition with their members, and using producers' equity for these purposes.
- D. The sale of farmer owned cooperatives to private industries that would increase the concentration of the market in which the cooperative operated.
- E. Providing large retirement and severance packages, or "Golden Parachutes", to executives of cooperatives who fail to represent the interests of the farmer-owners through mismanagement when bankruptcy forces the cooperative to close.

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Protection from unfair taxes and regulations that destroy the benefits derived therefrom.
- B. Market Promotions Programs and Export Enhancement programs only for farmer owned export cooperatives.
- C. A co-op bill of rights to aid members in regaining active independent producer control of management salaries and co-op activities that may not be in the interest of its members or family farm agriculture.
- D. We support a co-op structure that requires payout of retained equity when a member becomes inactive in any particular production area.
- E. Measures restricting voting stock and ownership to farmer members of the co-op.
- F. Measures restricting non-farmer investor control of farmer cooperatives.
- G. Measures restricting the board membership of farm cooperatives to farmers only.

Data and Artificial Intelligence

Big data and the "artificial intelligence" it enables is changing our world rapidly. Most of us are impacted in major ways many times every day, sometimes knowingly and sometimes not.

We are in favor of the following practices:

1. **Promote Data Sharing Standards and Initiatives:** Encourage the sharing of agricultural data among farmers, researchers, and AI developers while ensuring data privacy and security. This could be facilitated through the establishment of agricultural data cooperatives or platforms that aggregate data while protecting individual privacy. Today, much of the data generated in ag is limited to a few companies, which is a huge limiting factor to innovation and a barrier for any new companies.
2. **Develop Clear Regulatory Frameworks for Ethical AI Development:** Establish clear guidelines and regulatory frameworks for the use of AI in agriculture. This would involve setting standards for data collection, usage, and transparency to ensure that AI systems are reliable, ethical, and do not harm the environment or market dynamics. Furthermore, ensure that AI systems do not perpetuate biases, are transparent in their decision-making processes, and are accountable for their outcomes. The historical data that most models are trained on have inherent biases and thus AI-based systems too often replicate them in their decisions.
3. **Invest in Digital Infrastructure:** Improve rural digital infrastructure to ensure that farmers, especially in remote areas, have access to the high-speed internet required to take advantage of emerging data and related technologies.
4. **Workforce Training and Education:** Implement programs to train farmers and agricultural workers in AI and related technologies. This could involve partnerships with educational institutions, online courses, and on-site training programs. Many of our family farmers are rightfully skeptical of AI tools today because they are controlled by a few big players. Big data is not going away however, and so empowering farmers and democratizing data is a necessity for family farms to continue to survive in the era of AI.
5. **Support Small Farmers:** Develop programs that specifically support small and marginalized farmers in adopting AI technologies. This could involve subsidized access to AI tools, financial assistance, and technical support. This can help level the playing field for the small farmers who are at a substantial disadvantage to their larger counterparts.
6. **Foster Sustainable Practices:** Encourage the use of AI to promote sustainable agricultural practices. AI can help optimize resource usage, reduce waste, and minimize environmental impact, aligning with broader sustainability goals including increasing resilience in local and regional food systems. However, these sustainability goals are often not the most attractive opportunities for large players in the AI space today because they are not the most profitable.

Defense Spending

Because of the increased spending on defense, competition for discretionary funding for Farm Bill programs, and fraud and waste in the military industrial complex,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Closer scrutiny of government spending on the military.
- B. Military spending subject to the same accountability and cuts as any other recipient of government funds.
- C. Giving military personnel a living wage.
- D. Keeping current equipment operable.
- E. Clamping down on overpriced and shoddy equipment provided by contractors.
- F. Gathering increased international support in any war.

- G. Less reliance on National Guard call-up duty for foreign conflicts.
- H. Increased accountability for military contractors and their employees.
- I. The elimination of non-competitive bidding for military contracts
- J. Full funding for the comprehensive medical care for mental and physical needs of US Veterans.

WE OPPOSE:

- A. The use of tax dollars to oppress basic human rights.

Education

We urge continued educational support such that all states and areas of our nation can provide equal educational opportunities for all their children. The state should be free to apply federal aid funds to best serve the educational needs of the state. We see no threat in federal aid to continued historic control of education by the state and its political subdivisions. The federal government should provide increased funds for student loans, grants, and other assistance programs. Because of its unfair impact on Iowa schools and because of inadequate funding to cover increased costs, we urge Congress to repeal the "No Child Left Behind" law.

Employment for Disabled Americans

Farmers Union supports public and private programs aimed at finding, testing for aptitudes, and rehabilitating Americans, and supports the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

Experience Works (Green Thumb Program)

Experience Works, formerly Green Thumb, provides part time employment to older, low-income men and women to provide conservation, community service, housing, rehabilitation and winterization, and outreach services to our rural communities. We urge the program to be extended to assist eligible low-income residents.

Farm-Labor Coalition

We urge increased cooperation between farmers, workers, small business owners and consumers for the mutual benefit of all. We support labor and their struggle for fair pay for their labor and decent working conditions.

We oppose efforts to weaken overtime pay standards.

We call for the prohibition of federal government contracts with companies hiring permanent replacement workers during labor disputes.

We support strengthening worker protection standards regarding wage rates, health, safety and housing conditions for migrant seasonal, minority and other farm laborers. We support the right of workers to bargain collectively for fair wages. We believe fair worker standards should include a livable minimum wage.

We support humane terms of employment for farm labor. Specifically,

- Farm workers should not work more than 48 hours per week, unless they are paid 150% for overtime, excluding seasonal workers.
- We oppose expansion of the H2A program as presently constituted. New guest worker legislation should allow unless those workers have freedom to change employers during their contract and if they complete three contracts will be eligible for a green card and a pathway to citizenship.

We oppose construction of additional walls along our southern border and support no increase in the number of border control agents. We oppose the use of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to breakup otherwise law-abiding

families that happen to have undocumented members. We oppose the collaboration of local authorities in ICE raids, unless ICE has a court-ordered search warrant.

We encourage all of our members to celebrate the accomplishments of the labor movement on the Labor Day Holiday.

Farm Equipment Repair

We oppose restrictions of farmers' right to repair as imposed by manufacturers of farm equipment.

We support farmers' rights of ownership of the data generated as a result of farm operations.

Health Care

We believe that access to high quality and affordable health care is a basic human right. We call on the federal government to initiate a Medicare for all national health insurance program. We believe that such a program would save billions of dollars, control costs and provide health care to all Americans.

We believe Medicare should offer a simple and comprehensive drug benefit administered through the traditional Medicare program and not through private industry. The US government should utilize its bargaining power to purchase medication from drug manufacturing companies at discounted prices.

We believe the health care provider and the patient should determine the length of a patient's hospital stay. Health insurance companies or health maintenance organizations should not make this decision.

Medicare reimbursement to health care providers in Iowa should fully cover medical costs and should not be significantly less than reimbursements in other states.

Insurance

Insurance companies should be required to notify policyholders regarding liability for accidents to farm employees. Workers compensation requirements should be clearly defined in liability insurance policies.

Insurance companies should be required to cover family members and temporary employees or day laborers.

OSHA

We favor farmer representation on OSHA Advisory Committees.

We recommend that family farmers employing a limited number of farm workers continue to be exempt from OSHA regulations.

Political Reform

Because we believe that limiting the number of terms that a person could serve in Congress would eliminate both good and bad legislators; we feel curtailing special interest campaign contributions and establishing a system of public financing would be a more effective way of reforming Congress. We urge support of a cap on money, which may be donated during an election cycle by individuals and corporations to political parties. We urge the elimination of "soft money" contributions and the overturning of the *Citizens United* ruling by the Supreme Court.

We oppose the use of secret “earmarks” in the congressional appropriations process which direct the use of federal funds toward specific projects without the usual scrutiny of the legislative process and without administrative scrutiny to determine the relative worthiness of the project

We urge a limitation on the amount of money spent for elections by candidates for public office. We support partial public financing of all Senatorial and Congressional elections. We call for the elimination of all honorariums paid to elected officials. We support a ban of all out of state money in the gubernatorial campaign.

We strongly oppose decisions made by the US Supreme Court that create new political rights for corporate interests rather than protecting the rights of individuals to control our system of government. Such judicial activism in support of corporate corruption of the political system lessens the representation of ordinary people in the political process.

Postal Regulations

We oppose any curtailment of Saturday mail delivery or other services to rural areas. We are opposed to the elimination of overnight delivery to rural areas. We are opposed to the privatization of the U.S. Postal System.

Public Relations

We urge the National Farmers Union to continuously make presentations before consumer groups, men's and women's business groups, colleges and schools, and other wide audiences to explain and to educate our citizens about the need for a national food policy.

We urge the NFU to develop an extensive consumer relations program to communicate all aspects of agriculture, the cost of production, and the function of farm programs. We will cooperate with other interest groups to tell this story nationwide.

Social Policies

The Farmers Union supports Federal and State funding for retraining for our many displaced farmers, at a wage that enables them to maintain a decent standard of living for their families.

Farmers Union supports the concept of small towns and communities banding together, in the interest of promoting agriculture as a means of economic development in their areas.

The Farmers Union supports legislation which prohibits age discrimination.

We support measures that improve pathways for urban farmers and historically underserved farmers to have thriving rural businesses.

Social Security

The Social Security fund should not be raided or shifted into the general budget or defense budget. We recommend that the minimum monthly Social Security benefits be raised in accordance with the cost-of-living rates, and that other pensions not be affected by any change in Social Security benefits. We recommend that all cost-of-living increases should be based on a flat dollar amount rather than a percentage.

We oppose IRS interpretation of the ten (10) year CRP payment as earned

income. We believe that if a farm owner of CRP land provides no material participation or care of the land, he should report the income as rental income.

We believe that the amount of income subject to the Social Security tax and Medicare tax should not be capped and that additional revenue should be used to secure the long-term viability of the Social Security and Medicare systems. The medicare tax should be applied to all income.

Taxation

We believe that all taxes ought to be progressive and reflect a person's ability to pay. We believe that, when properly structured, the income tax is inherently fairer than other types of taxes. We support a graduated income tax and the continuation of deductions for home mortgages and dependents.

The legislation that creates the KEOGH Plan should be revised to better reflect the needs of family farmers. We recommend that cooperatives be allowed to have the KEOGH Plan for member investors, thereby leaving dividends tax-free until retirement.

Farmers Union calls upon Congress to realistically study the tax structure in this nation. Realizing that with the present taxing structure, the effects of graduated taxing are effectively diminished by the current application of the deduction system, we call for legislation to more fairly tax income above normal levels. A thorough study should be done of the flat rate tax concept before any action is taken to pass it into law.

Realizing that concentration of land and livestock production in fewer and larger hands are two of the biggest concerns in agriculture, we call for elimination of the tax incentive to those outside agriculture, to invest in farmland and related areas of production.

Realizing that entry into agriculture has become almost impossible without inheritance, and difficult even then, we call for an end to tax policies that were formulated to compensate for income loss from low prices, but in effect, do this only for high equity, high income producers, often to the disadvantage of low equity and beginning producers.

We urge elimination of "tax havens" through international treaties and preferential capital gain treatment for foreign investors. The practice of allowing subtraction of farm losses should be limited to people with less than \$25,000.00 nonfarm gross income.

We strongly oppose any reduction in capital gains taxation, but support adjusting the taxable gain by the amount of accumulated inflation. We believe that capital gains should be taxed at the same rate as earned income.

We favor income averaging for self-employed people.

We favor an investment tax credit targeted to the seller of farmland and used machinery who sells to a beginning farmer. This should include a one time only sale from parent to offspring that could be also be applied to small business owners.

We oppose the elimination of the step-up basis given heirs on assets they inherit.

We urge congress to modify the estate tax by gradually raising exemption levels, but we oppose the elimination of the estate tax.

We urge Congress to limit the use of "1031 Rollovers" to property used for similar purposes.

Transportation

Good transportation is essential to a sound agricultural system. We favor an integrated transportation system of waterways, railways and roads. The monopolistic nature of transportation systems has created many problems. We urge the improvement of the national transportation system to facilitate the moving of agricultural products to and from market, and to improve the mobility of rural America.

We call upon the State Department of Transportation and related Federal agencies to conduct a study on the feasibility of public ownership of railroad right-of-ways as an alternative to the existing system.

We support a federally owned and operated interstate railway system to increase the fuel efficiency and availability of transportation services

We reaffirm our commitment to barge traffic on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. We favor modernization of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers to the extent that it will benefit family farmers. However, we feel that modernization should be environmentally friendly and cost effective.

Great potential exists for a better grain market on the West Coast of the United States. This potential is not being utilized by Midwestern producers because of inadequate rail service and inadequate export facilities. Now, therefore, Iowa Farmers Union urges a joint effort by other state Farmers Union executives in working out a desirable solution to this problem. We oppose proposals to increase the total amount of weight per rail car because of its negative impact on short lines essential to the transportation of products produced by family farmers.

We support legislation that provides economic assistance to railroads before abandonment petitions are filed.

We oppose collection of highway use taxes on agricultural fuels and other non-highway fuels.

Trucking industries weight and length standards should be regulated and standardized on a national level.

States should be notified far enough in advance so they can take the necessary precautions to protect their citizens when hazardous waste is being transported across the state.

A program should be developed to upgrade rural road bridges to handle legal weights.

Taxpayer dollars should not be used to allow for easier, cheaper transportation of foreign-made goods in a way that jeopardizes American jobs, national security, Iowa's farmland and environment. The state government of Iowa should cease its active participation in promoting this project.

STATE ISSUES

I. AGRICULTURE, FOOD & NUTRITION

Agriculture

The Iowa Farmers Union supports an agricultural system based on families. We consider family farms to be a farming situation where direct family members provide the majority of the labor and management and live on the farm or in the county or contiguous county.

We support a family farm system of agriculture because of its redeeming social values, including its effect on rural communities, families and our environment.

Vertical integration of the agricultural industry by the processing, distributing and retailing industries and conglomerate businesses has created unfair, monopolistic and monopsonistic practices that concentrate buying and selling power and make it exceedingly difficult for family farmers to remain competitive. This contributes to the decline of rural populations and the consequent crowding of metropolitan centers. It has resulted in a noticeable decline in competition in some phases of agricultural production and threatens others.

WE SUPPORT:

- A. A prohibition of the feeding of livestock by packers and multinational grain corporations.
- B. The family farm tax credit, including provisions for family farm corporations.
- C. Legislation to prohibit the purchase of farmland by investment syndicates.
- D. Listing all additives on the labels of milk and dairy products.
- E. Restoring the authority of counties to site industrial livestock operations.
- F. The promotion of the growing organic agriculture sector in Iowa and providing organic growers with the support necessary to make Iowa a leader in organic production.
- G. The removal of barriers to the legal production *and processing and sales* of industrial hemp. IDALS and local law enforcement should work with the federal government to help farmers to comply with federal law and allow them to grow this valuable oil and fiber crop.
- H. Enacting a graduated land tax, as an effective way to preserve family farm agriculture.
- I. Defining corporate animal confinement buildings as industrial facilities rather than agricultural facilities, taxing them at industrial rates.
- J. Directing the IDNR to more closely monitor industrial animal facilities and providing the resources to carry out that monitoring.
- K. A ban on any new open lagoons and a phasing out of existing ones.
- L. Strong laws that protect diversified farmers from negligent spray drift.
- M. The Iowa DNR should ensure that plots of ground, identified by farm and tract number, that are listed in manure management plans are not used by multiple manure management plans.

WE OPPOSE

- A. Use of cash accounting for farms of a type who gross over one (1) million dollars a year.
- B. Any contracting arrangement by packers that results in unfair competition to family livestock producers.
- C. Any state regulatory reform that reduces the ability of citizens to litigate or collect damages from dangerous or harmful corporate behavior or actions.
- D. The so-called "Ag-Gag" bill, which unfairly targets whistle-blowers in industrial agriculture facilities.

- E. Including family farm leasing corporations in the definition of “family farm corporations” under Chapter 9H of the Iowa Code.

Beginning Farmer Incentives

The high capital requirements to begin farming are working hardships on those who are attempting to get started. We favor special incentives to assist young and beginning farmers, in order to insure that American agriculture continues to be in the hands of family farmers.

Therefore,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Creating set asides specifically for beginning farmers in existing government programs.
- B. Tax incentives for selling or renting farmland to a beginning farmer.
- C. Funding for business training programs for beginning farmers, including special outreach to women and minority populations.
- D. A state program to offer student loan repayment assistance for beginning farmers.
- E. Making land acquired by a lending institution through foreclosure or deed back available for rent or purchase to a beginning farmer, once the original owner has proven unable to retrieve the property.
- F. Giving priority for Beginning Farmer Loan Program funds to beginning farmers who do not already own or rent farmland, machinery, equipment, breeding livestock, or farm improvements; allowing for contract sales between spouses, parents, grandparents, or siblings; and creating new programs specifically for beginning farmers who do not have a spouse, parent, grandparent, or sibling already engaged in farming.
- G. Increase funding for urban farming programs that improve equity of opportunity.
- H. Policies that result in affordable, secure access to farmland for beginning and underserved farmers.

Checkoff Programs

Commodity checkoff programs must be accountable to the needs of family farmers. All commodity checkoffs should be voluntary at the point of sale. Mandatory referendums should be conducted every 4 years. Checkoff funds should only be used toward marketing and research that benefits family-sized producers. Checkoff funds should in no way be used for lobbying and political activities or comingled with funds used for lobbying or political activity.

Contract Farming

While we may not like the concept of contract farming, we believe that farmers that subcontract to large agribusinesses need some basic protections. A model contract should be available for anyone considering entering contract feeding. The Secretary of Agriculture’s office should draft it and have it on file for requests. Information should be included about compensation including:

1. whether the contract ensures fair return for capital investment
2. whether the contract contains fair return for labor and services; and
3. whether the contract allows the grower to have some control over the factors that determine the level of payment to the grower, e.g., feed efficiency, feed ration, good feed conversion, quality of feeder stock and feed, etc.

The model contract should include at a minimum, a statement of potential liability based on historical average of other similar contracts for each party to the contract, procedures and remedies available if the contract is terminated and should state the availability of mediation.

Contracts should not be allowed to contain confidentiality clauses.

Contract integrators should be held liable for environmental damage caused by their livestock or crops.

Contract integrators should be required to act in good faith.

Contract growers should be allowed to obtain all information related to compensation, including grading of product and ranking with other growers.

Tournament compensation (based on ranking among growers) should be eliminated. Contract growers should be allowed to receive legal costs in legal settlements.

Contracts should not be allowed to require arbitration to settle disputes.

Contract growers should have a process to fix problems before a contract can be terminated. Contract growers should be compensated for damages when contracts are terminated.

Contract growers should be allowed to organize together without retribution.

Contract integrators should be required to negotiate with groups of producers in good faith.

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) is responsible for a broad range of programs impacting agriculture, consumer protection and the use of Iowa's natural resources. Among the programs and initiatives carried out as part of the mission of IDALS,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Required brand inspections at all livestock centers and a requirement for the consignment sheet or bill of sale to contain the license number, color and type of vehicle transporting the livestock and the identification of the driver.
- B. Adequate state funding for the eradication of brucellosis, pseudo-rabies and other livestock diseases, as well as the regulation of the transportation of livestock from large feedlots and livestock facilities to prevent transmission of disease.
- C. Making funding available through IDALS to landowners to eradicate multi-flora rose.
- D. Requiring the posting of adequate warning signs at all storage structures that have the potential to produce lethal gases.
- E. Stricter enforcement of the laws regarding cleanliness of all food handlers.
- F. Programs to pay farmers for delivering premium quality grain.
- G. Legislation that targets the liability of genetically modified products back to the originator of that product, not the producer.
- H. IDALS having the authority to monitor the health of livestock entering the state and to destroy, quarantine or return infected livestock.
- I. The continuation of the Iowa Grain Indemnity Fund Program as it is currently administered.
- J. Establishing and funding an Organic Center within IDALS to support the needs of organic agriculture.

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture has provided a valuable service to family farmers and to Iowa. We encourage the legislature to fully fund the center to support the goals of sustainable farming.

Livestock Production Practices

We support good animal husbandry in livestock production practices. We call for severe penalties for all parties involved in the mistreatment of farm animals and pets.

Local and Regional Food Systems

We support the movement by farmers and ranchers to market the production of their land to local communities in a fair and equitable manner. We believe that local and regional food systems increase awareness of the value and importance of locally grown foods to consumers. We further believe that such production and marketing can provide increased income to the farmer and rancher by increasing the share of the food dollar retained by the farmer. We define local food as food grown and/ or raised or value-added products produced with food grown and/or raised for human consumption in Iowa and adjacent counties. Therefore,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. The creation and continuation of farmers markets and community supported agriculture programs, both public and private.
- B. Development of state and local programs to support the development of local and regional food systems, including increased funding for initiatives and grant programs like Choose Iowa.
- C. Self-governance of farmers markets and local food systems.
- D. Programs and incentives to encourage the creation of cooperatively owned local food hubs to transport, process and aggregate locally produced agricultural products for use in local and regional markets.
- E. Development of sustainable agriculture production within cities and towns.
- F. Business tax abatements and incentives for small, state-inspected meat processing plants, including mobile slaughtering.
- G. Incentives for businesses and institutions to procure food from local vendors, including a mandated preference for locally produced food in purchases by state government and public educational institutions, and a tax credit for small farm operations that market to schools.
- H. Expanded funding for the Local Food & Farm Program, with expanded oversight by an advisory board, of which at least fifty (50) percent of members must be operators of direct market farms.
- J. Funding for new and existing programs to increase institutional access to locally produced food, including farm-to-school programs, the \$0.10/meal program, and programs bringing local produce to health care facilities.
- K. Funding for new and existing programs to increase access to and improve affordability of locally produced food for low income and underserved communities, including Double Up Food Bucks and similar programs.
- L. Funding for education and business training programs for direct market farms.
- M. Funding for programs that assist small farm operators with the marketing and processing of specialty crops, livestock, dairy and poultry.
- N. The development and publishing of materials by the Iowa cooperative extension service that document the best methods, practices, and strategies for small farm operators producing and marketing specialty crops, livestock, dairy and poultry.
- O. Financial assistance to small farm operators in the form of loans, grants, letters of credit, equity financing and buy-downs to finance the expansion and improvement of farming operations and the development of farmer-owned cooperative marketing and processing ventures.
- P. A property tax exemption for small farm operations producing specialty crops, livestock, dairy or poultry.
- Q. Increased opportunities that improve the ability for underserved communities to grow food for themselves.
- R. Increased opportunities for Iowa farmers to engage in wholesale

- contracted food production on their farms.
- S. Development of permanent state programs to continue the goals of the federal Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement Program and the Local Food for Schools (LFS) Cooperative Agreement Program, subsidizing the purchase of food from food system farmers for food assistance and schools.
- T. Requiring any state funding directed to food banks or food assistance organizations for purchasing food be used to source those foods directly from local food farms or via food hubs.

WE OPPOSE:

- A. Attempts to over-regulate farmers markets and local and regional food systems, while favoring maintaining public health and environmental standards.
- B. Attempts to over-regulate the processing of locally produced fresh milk.

Research and Agriculture

We support increased public investment in agricultural education and research via our land grant institutions and university extension service that is driven by input from farmers and that promotes the best interest of family farms and an economically and ecologically diverse and sustainable system of food production, particularly in the context of global climate change and the resilience of our agricultural ecosystem.

II. ENERGY, LAND USE, CONSERVATION & THE ENVIRONMENT

Agricultural Chemicals

Drift from the spray application of agricultural chemicals is a pervasive problem impacting farmers, residents, and laborers, particularly those involved in fruit, vegetable, honey and organic production. Therefore,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Stricter penalties for reckless or negligent damage to crops from spray drift, including failure to follow label requirements.
- B. A requirement that parties responsible for reckless or negligent spray drift pay the crop owner for both actual and punitive damages.
- C. Penalties for companies employing contract applicators who are responsible for reckless or negligent spray drift, particularly where a single company has been responsible for numerous instances of drift by its contractors.
- D. Requiring aerial spray applicators to request permission to fly below 300 feet in the vicinity of a resident's home, fields and livestock facilities.
- E. Requiring spray applicators to check the apiary and sensitive crop registries prior to application and to give 24 hour advance notice to those on the registries and all owners and tenants of adjacent properties; sensitive crop and apiary sites should be indicated on maps provided to aerial applicators.
- F. Requiring commercial spray applicators to report their pesticide applications to IDALS on a biannual basis and making that usage reporting available in a searchable online public database.
- G. Making incident reports of spray drift, including the results and resolutions of any investigations performed, available on a publicly accessible, searchable online database.
- H. Requiring that applicator insurance information be updated to include evidence of financial responsibility as a condition for licensure and certification, and making this information publicly available through IDALS.
- I. Increasing the required minimum liability insurance coverage for pesticide applicators to \$1 million annually and up to \$300,000 per incident.
- J. Requiring that pesticide applicator certification and continuing education courses include information on the financial impact that spray drift can have on sensitive crops, non- GMO crops and bee apiaries.
- K. Increasing the maximum pesticide label violation fine to \$5,000 per violation and increasing the penalty for second and subsequent offenses on a graduated scale.
- L. Providing for a formal procedure through IDALS to investigate reported incidents of spray drift and requiring that IDALS provide information on its website and in writing to individuals impacted by spray drift regarding their legal rights and available remedies.
- M. The creation by IDALS of easily, publicly accessible information related to the reporting protocol for spray drift incidents, an on-line reporting tool, a clarified statement of the role of the IDALS Pesticide Bureau in assisting with drift compensation, and information on risks from pesticide exposure.
- N. Making resources available for the state to turn around the results of spray drift testing within twenty-one (21) days of receiving the sample, and providing assistance to landowners to access private lab testing if IDALS is unable to return test results to the reporting party within twenty-one (21) days.
- O. The creation of a spray drift indemnity fund to improve the availability and efficiency of spray drift testing.
- P. Full funding of the Pesticide Bureau at the Iowa Department of Agriculture

and Land Stewardship through a fee structure from pesticide manufacturers, distributors and applicators.

Eminent Domain

The Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution assures that "private property shall not be taken for public use, without just compensation."

WE SUPPORT:

- A. A transparent and understandable process for the consideration of a proposed pipeline or transmission project that provides for meaningful input by landowners and members of the public.
- B. Fair compensation to landowners at all stages of a proposed pipeline or transmission project, including installation, operation and decommissioning.
- C. A clearly defined procedure to handle and resolve landowner complaints.
- D. Strict liability for owners and operators of pipelines and transmission projects for any and all damages caused by any activities related to the installation, operation or decommissioning of the project.
- E. Requirement for a pipeline or transmission project developer to provide the state with proof of financial responsibility prior to commencing a project.
- F. Clear prohibition of trespassing by those entities scouting potential projects and strong enforcement of trespassing laws.
- G. Creation of an indemnity fund to compensate landowners and communities for any damages including loss of yield resulting from a pipeline or transmission project that for any reason are not fairly and adequately compensated by the developer or owner of the project.
- H. A regulatory preference for existing rights-of-way when considering proposed routes for a pipeline or transmission project.
- I. Full consideration of potential impacts to social, human and ecological health when considering a proposed pipeline or transmission project.
- J. A requirement that any project granted eminent domain must be for the public use and benefit of the citizens of Iowa.

Energy

We believe energy is an important part of Iowa's economic future and that agriculture can and will play an important role in Iowa's future energy needs. Therefore, we support the re-creation of the office of energy independence for the state of Iowa and if it is not created, the activities of the office should be carried out by another state office.

We support the work of a state official to report to the government and legislature regarding Iowa's energy needs and methods to meet those needs within the state of Iowa, to promote renewable sources of energy, and to help develop capital, companies, and resources to make Iowa a net energy producer. This person should focus and coordinate research into environmentally sustainable, locally owned, community based renewable energy sources.

We support an increase in the state's renewable electricity standard from 105 megawatts to 100 percent by 2040. A renewable energy standard is the amount of renewable energy utilities must purchase or produce from renewable energy production facilities and provide to Iowa consumers. We support state legislation that encourages the utility companies to purchase renewable energy from small farmers and businesses. A significant portion of the standard should be set aside for distributed generation systems to encourage local ownership of these facilities.

We oppose the construction of coal plants in Iowa at this time and support the retirement of existing coal plants with a strong, just transition plan for coal workers.

We support a state Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS). The state income tax credit given to fuel retailers for sale of ethanol should be limited to independent fuel retailers. We support the establishment of a Renewable Fuels Standard that requires that all gasoline sold in Iowa (except for certain exempt purposes) be mixed with renewable fuels. Exempt purposes should include the use of small engine agriculture machinery.

We support state legislation that simplifies and standardizes interconnection agreements between utilities and farmers connecting renewable facilities into the power grid. We believe that state incentives for renewable facilities should be aimed at farmer- and community- (at least 51% local) owned systems. We also support legislation that protects farmers who enter into lease arrangements with wind farm developers.

We believe Iowa should promote, expand, and ensure localized ownership to the fullest degree possible in renewable/alternative energy development including wind, solar, biofuels, and other technologies. Policies that can achieve this goal are: feed-in tariffs, state incentives and mandates for locally owned facilities and tax credits for renewable energy production that can be used to offset active as well as passive income earned by farmers and small businesses.

We support the property right to install technology for renewable energies such as wind, solar, biomass conversion, and battery storage and selling excess energy to electric companies and rural electric cooperatives at the utility company's energy purchase price from their other providers. We support net metering of electricity usage at the farm. We support immediate research into replacement of the current electric energy distribution grid with a distributed generation system. We support the dual use of farm land for the simultaneous use of solar production and farming in a practice known as agrivoltaics.

Any new renewable energy facility that receives aid from the state should be 51 percent locally owned. This should include but not be limited to wind, solar, ethanol, and biodiesel.

We support amending sales tax code provisions that exempt wind power equipment from sales tax to include other renewable electricity generating equipment (solar, biomass, etc.)

We support a road tax exemption for individuals who wish to produce their own biofuels (ethanol or biodiesel) to match the federal exemption (400 gallons).

We support the development of new biofuel products like sustainable aviation fuel and renewable diesel.

We support the development of new biofuel crops like diversified perennial systems, switchgrass, hemp, and sorghum to add to diversity in agriculture and advance the economic and environmental benefits to Iowa and the nation.

We support a statewide performance-based energy efficiency resource standard of 2 percent per year for all Iowa utilities.

We support property assessed clean energy (PACE) as a financing mechanism used by local governments that allows property owners to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements through their local property tax payments.

Environment

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Limitations on the use of atrazine because of the concern for groundwater pollution.
- B. Identification of drainage outlets on agricultural land by the IDNR and

- C. the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for drainage permitting purposes.
- D. More cost share funding for targeted conservation projects from both federal and state sources, coupled with review.
- E. Greater efforts to educate farmers about the potential adverse effects of insecticide use in both the production and storage of grain.
- F. Encouragement of more use of integrated pest-management and integrated weed- management programs and crop rotations.
- G. The recycling of materials used in agriculture, consumer products and industry.
- H. Adequate funding of the Iowa Water and Land Legacy (IWILL) Trust Fund.

Genetically Modified Organisms and Biotechnology

We support the adoption of a precautionary principle in the regulatory approval process for the marketing of new genetically modified seeds. We recognize the difference between genetically modified and genetically engineered products.

We support publicly funded research into the long-term human, animal and ecological health impacts of genetically modified traits deployed in agricultural production.

We oppose the patenting of life forms. We further oppose patent holders charging farmers exorbitant technical fees and royalties for access to genetically modified seeds and patented farm animals.

We oppose further use of tax dollars in developing terminator technology that would ensure that seed will not reproduce. We oppose the development and selling of seed that is sterile.

We advocate legislation requiring that patent holders or owners of GMO technology be held strictly liable for safety, human health or environmental problems, including cross-pollination or contamination of neighboring crops related to the use of GMOs, as long as generally accepted crop production practices are followed.

If genetically modified organisms are accidentally displaced (through drift, etc.) onto land owned or rented by a farmer, the farmer should not be required to return the crops, or revenue from the crops, which result from the displacement.

Damages caused to farmers through lower prices, lost markets, or contamination, shall be full reimbursed to farmers by the company producing the genetically modified product. We advocate that all data used in the analysis of the health and environmental effects of GMOs be public record.

Government regulatory agencies shall not license genetically modified products that are not acceptable for both human consumption and animal feed. Government regulatory agencies and input suppliers shall ensure that farmers are informed of all potential market risks and segregation requirements associated with planting any licensed genetically modified crop.

All GMO seed shall be clearly labeled with the following information: 1) markets (foreign or domestic) where the product is not accepted: and 2) all planting and handling restrictions. A paper verification system should be put in place to ensure input supplies are informing farmers regarding GMO risks and responsibilities.

We support a uniform federal standard that requires the clear labeling of agricultural products containing genetically modified material or ingredients.

We support the regulation of genetically engineered products.

Land Use Policies

Despite the fact that in over supply situation, the temporary removal of farmland from production may be necessary, irreplaceable farmland must be preserved for food and fiber production. We encourage each county to maintain a zoning committee to ensure the preservation of productive agricultural land and to require the prudent use of such land.

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Assistance to family farmers in conservation and the maintenance of an ecological balance.
- B. Additional programs to regulate surface mining to prevent destruction of land and water.
- C. Regulating the use of inorganic chemicals.
- D. Restrictions placed on the importation of household or industrial waste for disposal in Iowa.

A state land preservation and development commission should be established. This commission would consist of three members from each Congressional District, with staggered terms of office. The membership would include an active farmer, a member of a county board of supervisors, and a mayor or councilperson. The commission shall work with the Department of Soil Conservation, with the Department providing support services.

The commission shall prepare and recommend to the General Assembly, a state land preservation policy with guidelines for guidance and direction of the state, cities, counties and special districts on matters relating to land use.

Land preservation and development organizations should be permanently established at the county level, with membership from farmers, the county Board of Supervisors and mayors or city council members. Among the duties of the county-level organizations would be: protection of agricultural land; solid waste disposal; sewage treatment and collection; water supply and distribution; proper development of industrial, chemical, agricultural, educational, residential, and recreational facilities and areas; and, coordinate county wide transportation systems which include elements of the statewide transportation plan.

We are opposed to the use of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to subsidize urban sprawl.

Livestock Concentration

- A. County Zoning

All Iowa counties should be required to enact zoning ordinances, and counties should be allowed to zone confinement livestock facilities and feedlots.

- B. Corporate Farming Laws

We support a ban on packer ownership of livestock and contract feeding. Additionally, we strongly oppose farm ownership by non-family owned corporations, and we believe that the requirements for authorized family farm corporations, limited partnerships and limited liabilities as contained in Chapter 9H should not be weakened.

- C. Economic Development

Funding - We believe established and moderately sized farmers and small businesses should be given equal access to or a preference in economic development programs. Economic development monies should not be given to projects that are not sustainable community development.

Taxes - Presently Iowa farms are taxed on the basis of their productivity that lowers agriculture's share of the total property tax burden. This tax benefit should not be available to factory hog farms. These factories are comparable to industry and

should be taxed at an industrial rate. The pollution control tax credits available to confined animal facilities should be eliminated.

D. Environmental Regulations

We support a moratorium on confined feeding operations above 300 animal units until the EPA declares Iowa's waterways unimpaired.

The following environmental and health regulations should apply to facilities containing 300 or more animal units (one-time capacity) within a one-mile radius. For the purposes of these regulations, animals belonging to an owner or owners or entity/entities and housed within a one-mile radius are considered one operation.

These units are consistent with criteria used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits except for the addition of pigs under 55 lbs.

Animal units are measured as follows:

0.7 dairy cattle	=	1 animal unit
1.0 cattle	=	1 animal unit
10.0 sheep	=	1 animal unit
0.5 horses	=	1 animal unit
2.5 hogs	=	1 animal unit
5.0 pigs under 55 lbs	=	1 animal unit
5.5 turkeys	=	1 animal unit
100 laying hens/broilers	=	1 animal unit (continuous overflow watering)
30 laying hens/broilers	=	1 animal unit (liquid manure handling system)

E. Operating Permits

We support a strengthened master matrix that lowers the requirement for permit applications to 300 animal units, requires a greater distance from homes or public places and requires a passing score of 80 percent in each category

Producers meeting the above requirements must obtain an operating permit through the county supervisors in addition to the construction permits required by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The permits should be renewed annually after proof of compliance with all existing regulations and the waste management plan. A fee paid by applicants should offset the costs of administration so that no new financial burdens are placed on county governments. The operating permit requirements will be retroactive to cover all facilities over 300 animal units in the state with a period of time allowed for existing operations to come into compliance.

Integrators' names should be on all applications to build and/or operate an AFO or CAFO. A copy of the certified letter sent to all residents within 2 miles of proposed AFO or CAFO should also accompany the application.

Waste management plan - A five-year waste management plan must be submitted with the permit application and should be consistent with waste management requirements listed below. The applicant must demonstrate enough acres owned, leased or contracted for disposal of manure. A copy of the plan shall be kept as part of the public record and kept on file at the county courthouse.

Bonding - In order to protect counties from potentially devastating clean up costs of

waste storage systems, large producers should be required to have a surety bond sufficient to return land to its original condition. The bonds should be secured by the owner before operating permits are granted. These bonding requirements should be retroactive for existing facilities over 1,000 animal units. If bonding is not available, money should be deposited in an escrow account for this purpose.

F. Waste management

We support utilizing additional research to determine appropriate managed grazing techniques that protect the quality of water, including buffer areas and fencing along streams where appropriate. There should be adequate funding and increased cost share for the installation of controls and features that will allow farmers to transition away from the practice of watering livestock in open surface waterways.

For operations with greater than 300 animal units within a 1-mile radius, we recommend the following requirements:

- Waste management plans should be long term and should be based on soil tests, the nutrient content of manure and the fertility needs of crops.

- Manure application rates should be based on the phosphorus (P) needs of crops. The amount to apply should be based on recent soil tests (within present crop rotation) and on recent (within 5 years) chemical analysis of the manure. Application should be done so as not to exceed the maximum efficiency of the nutrients.

No EQIP money should be provided to any livestock confinement operations.

Regardless of the particular nutrient used to determine rate of application, the following requirements should apply:

- Manure should not be applied in excessive amounts on ground that will be planted into soybeans. Surface application of manure should not be allowed during the fall on fields having produced soybeans during the prior growing season unless all field edges bordering waterways are seeded to a perennial crop.

- Manure should be applied as close to planting time as possible. If fall applications must be made (due to wet fields, etc.) they should not be made before soil temperature is 50 degrees and cooling.

- Application to frozen soil should be prohibited. In the case of extreme emergencies, manure may be applied to frozen ground with the approval of county supervisors at a public meeting, but should not be applied on slopes that exceed 4 percent.

- Manure must be injected or incorporated immediately or as soon as weather permits after application to reduce odor and nutrient losses. Disposal of waste through irrigation gun method should be prohibited.

An inspection pipe should be required at the lowest point of tile surrounding the berm of the lagoon. The Department of Natural Resources should inspect the tile lines twice a year.

Lagoon requirements should be based on the best available technologies to prevent leaching, spills and vapors. These requirements might include: covers, foliage barriers around the lagoons and cement lined bottoms and sidewalls. Until lagoon requirements can be formulated and proven to meet tight environmental and health safety standards, a moratorium should be enacted on the construction of new lagoons or earthen storage structures.

Setback requirements

Residences - The facilities (buildings and lagoons) should be set back by 2.5 feet per animal unit from a residence unless written permission is obtained from the neighbors. The setback requirement should not exceed two miles.

Adjoining Property - A facility should be set back a minimum of 150 feet from a property line.

Buffer zones - The DNR should establish setbacks of at least one-half mile from the outside perimeter of buildings and lagoons to streams, lakes, drainage wells and other waters in the state where the land is level. Distances should be greater for land with more slope.

The facilities cannot be closer than two (2) miles to an established county, state or national park or public recreation area and wildlife management areas.

G. Additional Regulations

Environmental Impact Study (EIS) - A complete EIS should be done by a bonded environmental engineer prior to the issuance of construction permits. Residents should be notified within 5 miles of the proposed site prior to testing or sampling for permits.

DNR Funding - The DNR should be adequately funded to do core sampling at lagoon sites themselves and to do periodic inspections of facilities. Financing of enforcement should be done through a check-off system on a per head basis by those operations to which these regulations apply (greater than 300 animal units).

H. Human and animal health

1. Employee protections - Employees should be given written warnings (in the language of the employee if possible) on the health impacts of working in these facilities.

- Employees must be at least 18 years old.

- Health insurance should be paid by the employer during time of employment. The employer should be responsible for any health costs that are a result of working in the facilities for up to five years after termination of employment.

- Employers should pay for annual physical exams of employees if not covered by an insurance policy.

- The Iowa Department of Public Health should develop rules that require the posting of signs at the facilities concerning health risks.

2. The State of Iowa should regulate ambient air emissions from industrial livestock facilities. When developing regulations, public officials should utilize all relevant research on the subject. Education on health risks of large livestock facilities to neighboring residents should be made available and there should be a central place in the state to report such problems.

3. Animal health concerns - We recommend stricter controls and testing of transported animals (dead or alive). Special consideration should be given to the transportation across state lines.

Nuisance Lawsuit Protection

We are opposed to nuisance lawsuit protection, as it has unfairly reallocated property rights to industrial operations bearing little, if any, resemblance to family

farming. We support the holding by the Iowa Supreme Court that a statute providing protection against nuisance lawsuits is unconstitutional, and we urge the Iowa Legislature not to pass a “Right to Farm” bill.

Rural Electric Cooperatives

We are opposed to RECs furnishing electricity to large farms and/or businesses at a discount rate below average cost to family farm members of the same cooperative.

RECs need to be regulated similarly to the investor utilities, with a focus on net metering, feed-in tariffs, a renewable electricity standard, interconnection standards, and efficiency standards.

Rural Water

We feel that rural water delivery systems are a viable alternative for rural residents when contamination of rural wells and ponds is a real possibility. Rural water systems should not be viewed as an alternative to good environmental policy. Rural water systems should not be used as a tool to encourage urban sprawl.

Water Quality and Quantity

Farmers are proud to serve as stewards of our land and water, and they have been asked to invest significant time, acres and dollars in implementing conservation and pollution control measures on their farms as part of the state’s strategy to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution and improve the quality of Iowa watersheds. Furthermore, we acknowledge the increasing demand for water from industry (e.g. ethanol plants, data centers, crop irrigation, municipal systems, etc.) and the increasingly erratic precipitation patterns and reduced ground water availability. To ensure that both farmers’ resources and public funds are expended in a cost-effective manner,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Requirements and standards for water quality and quantity monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of projects once they have been installed.
- B. A 20-year timeline, with 5-year interim benchmarks, for measuring progress toward the overall goal of 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus pollution.
- C. The establishment of local watershed goals that support the statewide goal for reducing nitrogen and phosphorus pollution.
- D. Adequate and sustainable funding to support the nutrient reduction strategy.
- E. Greater efforts to design targeted conservation planning and incentives (e.g., installation of wetlands, bioreactors, riparian buffers, etc.) and strategically allocate funding to facilitate conservation in areas that are the most critical for watershed health.
- F. The adoption of a watershed approach to restoring and protecting Iowa’s surface and ground water that incorporates comprehensive assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring of all water contaminants.
- G. Authorization and funding for a comprehensive water quality monitoring program that includes the monitoring of private wells, to better assess the level of contamination of private well water and the public health impact on rural residents.
- H. Requiring that industries that are heavy users of water be required to use surface water instead of groundwater and to recycle that water.

Wildlife Management

Because wildlife damage to farm crops is severe in some areas of the state, we

request that all special permits to hunt on a farmer's own land or land rented by the farmer continue to be issued free of charge to the applying owner or renter and members of the producer's residing family, and that the restrictions be the same as for paid permits.

III. RURAL QUALITY OF LIFE & THE ECONOMY

Banking

The Iowa Farmers Union opposes the concept of Interstate Banking.

WE SUPPORT:

- A. High levels of community reinvestment standards for all banks operating in Iowa.
- B. Strict enforcement of those standards.
- C. Access to Federal Reserve monies for small lenders at the same discount rate as the large interstate lenders.
- D. An investigation into the creation of a state bank for the purpose of economic development within the state of Iowa.

Boycott

Be it resolved that the Iowa Farmers Union at the discretion of the Board of Directors may call for a boycott of products from any company whose actions or communications are detrimental to the survival of the family farm.

Cooperatives

We support a co-op bill of rights to aid members in regaining active independent producer- control of management salaries and co-op activities that may not be in the interest of its members or family farm agriculture. We support cooperative structure that requires payout of retained equity when a member becomes inactive in production agriculture. We support restricting voting stock and ownership to farmer members of the co-op. We support restricting non-farmer investor control of farmer cooperatives.

Economic Development

We believe that economic development efforts by the State of Iowa should develop economic activity by utilizing the strengths of our state: productive soils and abundant natural resources, innovative people with a strong work ethic, and a spirit of cooperation and community. We feel that an emphasis should be placed on the development of small businesses that provide jobs paying a living wage. We feel that efforts should encourage the production, processing, and retailing of local foods. Special emphasis should be given to encourage the development of processing of locally grown meat and poultry.

We support raising the minimum wage in Iowa to \$12 per hour and then incrementally to \$15 per hour over the course of 2 years, and that the minimum wage should then be indexed to increase with inflation.

We support the creation of four (4) regional economic development boards to replace the statewide Iowa Economic Development Authority.

We strongly oppose efforts to privatize economic development activities of the state of Iowa.

Education

We support immediate discontinuation of income tax credits for private school tuition, in any form, as they are detrimental to our public school system.

We favor the repeal of the state law that allows the additional levee of 10% tax by school boards without a referendum.

We support changing state law concerning bond issues for school districts so that bond issues could be paid for by at least a 50% income surtax, but requiring 60% of votes to pass bond issues, until such time as all property is taxed, not just land and buildings.

We support efforts to encourage new legal immigrants to become functioning members of the community

We encourage marketing and outreach to the general public to encourage understanding of farming challenges and opportunities in order to build a broader societal knowledge of the importance of the family farm system of agriculture.

Curriculum in the K-12 system shall be developed and implemented to promote sustainable agriculture and local and regional food systems. This effort shall tie into the STEM curriculum.

Elections

We urge a limitation on the amount of money spent for elections by candidates for public office. WE SUPPORT:

- A. Development of a system of public financing.
- B. Legislation to require a 3-year waiting period before state elected officials and/or political appointees may be paid to lobby the Iowa Legislature after leaving their governmental positions.
- C. Electoral reforms that encourage wide voter participation.

Family Issues

We urge the courts to enforce more severe punishment of persons convicted of domestic abuse and sexual and physical abuse.

The Farmers Union supports legislation which prohibits race, age, sexual orientation, and gender discrimination.

Government Oversight

Government works best with direct input and accountability from its citizens, often in the form of citizen boards and commissions designed to interact with government agencies. We oppose top-down efforts to remove existing citizen boards and commissions.

Health Care

We support a national "single payer" health insurance program, which would save money and guarantee access to a quality health care for all Americans. Until such

program is established,

WE SUPPORT:

- A. A “single payer” health insurance program for the state of Iowa, which includes mental health and substance abuse treatment coverage
- B. Iowa’s participation in the expansion of Medicaid, as provided for in the Affordable Care Act.
- C. Aggressive elimination of Medicare and Medicaid abuses.
- D. Patient rehabilitation and prevention programs and anti-smoking efforts funded by liquor tax revenue and Iowa’s share of tobacco company settlements.
- E. Coverage shall not be denied based on preexisting conditions, including those related to mental health and substance abuse.
- F. The elimination of lifetime limits.
- G. Full funding of mental health services for all Iowa citizens regardless of location.

Taxes

Persons earning less than \$25,000 should be exempt from paying state income tax. Married people making \$35,000 or less (combined) should be exempt from paying state income tax. Earned and passive income should be taxed progressively at the same rate.

We urge the Legislature to enact a three factor corporate tax in place of the present single factor tax.

We urge enactment of a graduated land tax. We recommend that the legislature appropriate sufficient funds to pay agricultural land tax credits in full. Ag land tax credit should not go to out- of-state landholders. We urge the Legislature to prohibit transfer of additional tax liabilities by the Executive Branch to property tax rolls in time of economic emergency. New sources of revenue must be found to finance the schools and the county government, to lessen the dependence on property taxes. We recommend that all income producing properties held by nonprofit organizations and other institutions should be placed back on the income and property tax rolls.

Intangible property, as well as monies and credits, should be taxed at comparable rates to real property. We oppose property tax abatement on all new constructions.

Iowa should immediately eliminate the pollution control property tax exemption for confinement buildings holding more than 300 units.

We should enact a property tax exemption for conservation buffers along rivers, lakes, and streams.

WE SUPPORT:

- A. Repeal of the sales tax on grain storage.
- B. Requiring mineral rights holders to pay a portion of property taxes assessed against that land.
- C. Tax laws that create opportunities for beginning farmers, as opposed to corporate or foreign ownership.
- D. Extending the Family Farm Tax Credit to include all farms, including farms operating on less than 10 acres.
- E. Continuation of the wind energy tax credit as a transferable tax credit.
- F. Classification of industrial farms as industrial property instead of agricultural.
- G. Development of a system of credits to encourage retention and decrease release of soil carbon.
- H. The creation of a ‘bio-sanctuary’ tax exemption for rural property owners to maintain unoccupied homesteads and farm buildings to promote habitat for

wildlife and potential future homes for rural lowans.

Transportation

We believe that all monies acquired through gas taxes and road use taxes should be used only to maintain our highways, roadways, and bridges and not for recreational projects. A program should be developed to upgrade rural road bridges to handle legal weights.

In the interests of moving farm products to market and to facilitate movement of goods to the farmers, we approve of state financial assistance for repair of railroad right-of-ways and urges that the program be expanded and that financing goes to the actual repair of railroad beds.

We favor public and private ownership of railroad beds, allowing any carrier of freight or passengers to operate over them for a fee. Amtrak service should be continued across Iowa.

We support the participation by the state of Iowa in the Midwest Rail Compact, including the purpose of connecting Midwest cities by high-speed passenger rail.

Our present two lane highways and farm-to-market roads must be repaired and upgraded where necessary. Bridge repair is greatly needed on many of the highways, and rural roads, and the process should begin immediately.

We appreciate the public health and environmental benefits that are derived by citizens utilizing and enjoying bicycles. In order to ensure safe roads and highways, we support policies that will encourage the use of highly visible and reflective clothing and equipment, that will increase the use of bicycle helmets, and that will enforce the laws for all moving vehicles.